

# Conklin calls for transportation funds

By Casey McDermott  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Local state representative and lieutenant governor candidate Scott Conklin is one of several Pennsylvania leaders speaking out in favor of patching up the state's transportation funding.

Concerns about ailing roads, bridges and other public transportation systems dominated a Monday press conference held by Conklin, D-Centre, in State College, said Tor Michaels, Conklin's chief of staff.

"Rep. Conklin believes that the No. 1 safety issue facing our residents now is our transportation infrastructure needs," Michaels said. "And we need to come up

with a bipartisan plan to address this critical funding issue."

Conklin's stance echoes that of Gov. Ed Rendell, who just last week gave a call to arms in front of the Pennsylvania Senate Transportation Committee urging its members to enact a "real and lasting transportation funding solution."

Pennsylvania ranks first in the nation for structurally deficient bridges.

The 5,646 cases in the state outnumber those in New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Virginia, and

Maryland combined, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) "Transportation Funding Crisis" website.

Eighteen highway and bridge improvement projects in Centre County will go unfixed until additional funding is available, according to PennDOT.

Public transportation projects for the Centre Area Transportation Authority (ATA), including 16 bus replacements, will also be delayed until more funding is available, according to PennDOT.

In order to foot the bill for these and other projects, Michaels said legislators should look at solutions such as imposing a Marcellus

Shale gas tax or cutting corporate income taxes by 21 percent.

"All options should be on the table," he said.

Penn State College Democrats President Rob Ghormoz agreed that transportation problems warrant cooperation across the aisle.

"When it comes to something like safety, it's not a politics issue anymore," Ghormoz (senior-political science) said. "You need bipartisan agreement that's keeping citizens safe."

Ghormoz also said he thinks the Marcellus Shale tax he should be explored as a potential source of transportation funding.

But Samuel Settle, chairman of the Penn State Young Americans for Freedom, said a tax on

Marcellus shale drilling could deter future development on the resource.

Settle also said putting a tax on Marcellus shale drilling could cause the burden to fall upon those that's concentrated in two major urban areas to fall upon those throughout the rest of the state.

"There's the same problem with education or any major state initiative — the state has kind of a weird, dichotomous relationship between big cities and rural areas like State College," Settle (junior-political science) said. "[Funds] almost always get allocated to the two voices who have the loudest voices and who can cry the loudest."

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Conklin

## Police warn against pool hopping

By Brendan McNally  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

When students are walking home after a long night of partying in the stifling heat of apartments or fraternity basements, they're looking for a way to cool off, and — for some — a quick skinny-dip in Penn State's outdoor pool is just too enticing to pass up.

Police have already cited students in six separate instances of trespassing in the outdoor pool after hours this summer, police said.

Some students — clad in swimsuits — appear to have planned out a night of forbidden swimming, police said, while others seem to have hopped the pool's fence for a spontaneous skinny-dip after a night of partying.

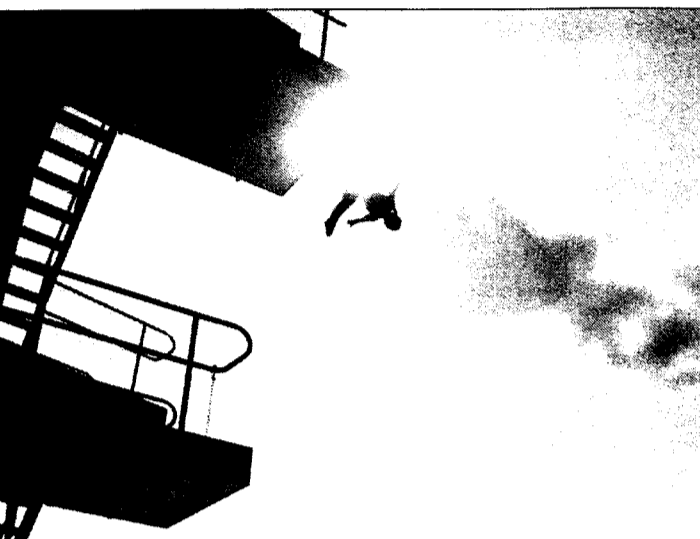
Planned or not, McCoy Natatorium Manager Shawn DeRosa said these nighttime swimmers can be deadly.

Swimmers can be severely injured or killed from a simple jump off the high dive, DeRosa said, not to mention that there's an increased chance of drowning at night.

Even worse, police said many of the swimmers cited for trespassing were under the influence of alcohol — a combination that Deputy Director of the Penn State Police Tyrone Parham said could be fatal.

"Even during the day with lifeguards, most pools say no alcohol because it impairs your ability to swim," Parham said.

Parham said alcohol impairs people's judgment and the point that they will try dangerous activ-



Collegian file photo

A diver jumps off of the high board, which is now closed to the public.

ities that they wouldn't otherwise do while sober.

DeRosa said lifeguards have to the hospital after they suffered injuries from routine jumps off the 7.5-meter diving platform during daytime hours.

DeRosa said swimmers have experienced severe facial trauma and dislocated shoulders from diving incorrectly off the platform.

Because of the danger, pool lifeguards won't allow swimmers to jump off the pool's highest, 10-meter platform, but there aren't any lifeguards to stop trespassers from making that jump at night — or to make sure they get injured.

"There could just be a very tragic accident," Parham said.

That's why police said they

patrol the area on a regular basis at night.

Police have cited trespassers on May 14, June 24, and July 9, 10, 11 and 18 of this year, police said.

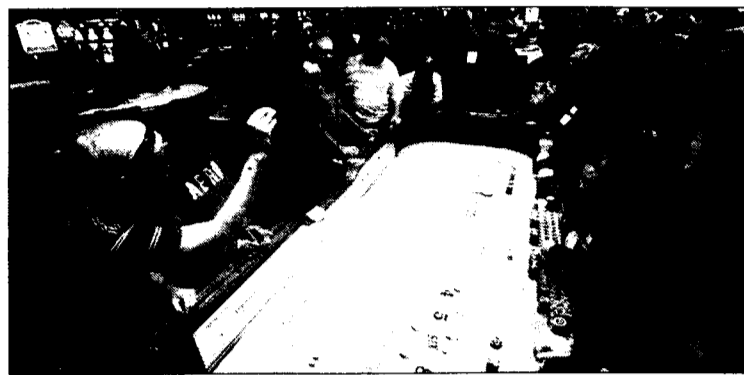
Police said they issued citations at the pool early in the morning on the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of Arts Fest weekend.

Police often catch the trespassers actually swimming in the pool or climbing over the fence soaking wet, police said.

More rarely, people are cited down the roads close to the pool soaking wet, police said.

"It's one of those things you shake your head at," Parham said. "It's just not a good idea."

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Matt Rourke/Associated Press

The new table games in casinos have brought about great revenue.

## State sees casino benefits

By The Associated Press

ALLENTOWN — Pennsylvania collected more in taxes from commercial casino gambling than any other state, including gambling heavyweight Nevada, a newspaper reported.

Pennsylvania's tax revenue from commercial casinos approached \$1.1 billion in the fiscal year that ended June 30, The Morning Call of Allentown reported Monday. Indiana was second with \$878 million and Nevada third with \$831 million.

A comparison by the American Gaming Association also showed Pennsylvania ahead in the 2009 calendar year.

Pennsylvania has just nine casinos operating, but its 55 percent tax rate on slot machine gambling more than makes up for it.

By comparison, Nevada takes 8 percent from its 260 casinos. Pennsylvania's casinos began offering table games this month.

Those games are being taxed at a rate of 16 percent and are projected to bring the state

\$320 million more per year.

Gaming Control Board spokesman Richard McGarvey said Pennsylvania's high revenue isn't surprising.

"Our tax is so high because the intention of the gaming law was to bring in tax money," he said.

Slot machine revenue has helped lower real estate taxes and helped prop up the state's horse racing industry. Its also helping pay for large civic projects like the expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia and grants for volunteer fire companies.

Gary Tuma, a spokesman for Gov. Ed Rendell, said a typical taxpayer have seen his bill go down about \$190 per year, and senior citizens get even bigger breaks.

Pennsylvania's 55 percent tax rate on slot-machine proceeds is among the highest in the nation, below New York's 65 percent and West Virginia's 57 percent.

The Keystone State's high tax rate is not unusual among states, that recently approved gambling, said a gaming industry analyst.

# Admissions office reaches out via networking

Twitter, Facebook are sites used to interact with incoming students.

By Sky Friedlander  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

This week's Spend A Summer Day marks the start of the new social media push by Penn State's Admissions Office.

Over the course of the two-week event, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions will post on sites like Facebook, Twitter and Flickr, recording the event and communicating with guests and those involved, Undergraduate Admissions Officer Alison Herget said.

One thing admissions is introducing to the Spend A Summer Day festivities is the live Twitter feed screen, Undergraduate Admissions Officer Jenna Spinelle said.

Anyone who includes the hashtag #SASD10 in their tweets will show up on the screen.

This Spend A Summer Day is like a "test" for admissions, she said.

If the push is a success, admissions might use sites like Twitter for more events.

"We're looking to engage more with prospective students and their families," Spinelle said. "We're really not sure how it's going to go."

Spinelle said social networking sites could be good for connecting

"What we're trying to do is give our visitors a new and exciting way to interact with us."

Jenna Spinelle  
Undergraduate Admissions officer

with students and their families, as well as with other Penn State groups and departments.

Admissions has been utilizing Facebook for about a year but has only recently started using Twitter on its own, Herget said.

"What we're trying to do is give our visitors a new and exciting way to interact with us," she said.

A screen displaying the Twitter feed is located in the HUB-Robeson Center, Herget said.

The HUB also houses admissions' "social media hub" where

employees can upload content on sites like Twitter, Facebook and Flickr, Herget said.

She said she also hopes people will use their phones throughout Spend A Summer Day and share the content and document their experiences while at Penn State.

Student volunteers with Flip Video camcorders will be recording video during the event, she added.

Herget said admissions is hesitant to announce any future social

networking plans because the office first wants to try it out to "see what the response is."

Rishi Agrawal said he wouldn't be adverse to an expansion in admissions' presence online.

"I think those would be useful places to find answers," Agrawal (freshman biochemistry and molecular biology) said.

Agrawal does not follow Penn State Admissions online, but he does connect to other students on Penn State Facebook pages, like the group for Schreyer Honors College students, Class of 2014, he said.

But he said he thinks pages run by students would be something especially helpful for other students like him to find answers.

## Sestak criticizes left

By Marc Levy  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG — U.S. Senate candidate Joe Sestak didn't spare fellow Democrats from blame Monday for supporting a financial services deregulation bill a decade ago that he now views as a key ingredient in Wall Street's meltdown and the national recession.

Sestak has repeatedly blamed his Republican opponent, former U.S. Rep. Pat Toomey, for helping cause the recession by supporting a 1999 banking regulation law that, Sestak says, led to the Wall Street meltdown.

Asked by a Pennsylvania Press Club luncheon moderator whether he also blames Democrats who supported the bill — including Bill Clinton, Joe Biden and Harry Reid — Sestak responded: "Yes."

"I stood up to my party when they're wrong and I'll say it again," Sestak said, a reference to his primary challenge to Republican-turned-Democrat Arlen Specter against the wishes of President Barack Obama and party leaders. Sestak won the primary.

Sestak, currently a House member, then repeated his criticism of some Democratic senators who had voted for Obama's health care overhaul earlier this year only after they received heavily criticized carve-outs in the bill.

It's like "when someone like at the end of the health care debate reaches over for a goody bar and says, 'You get my vote only because I take this back to my state,'" he said.

And while much of Congress supported the financial services deregulation bill, Sestak said "there were people and there were senators who spoke against that."

In 1999, Toomey supported the deregulation bill as a House member representing the Lehigh Valley.

Reid, now the Senate majority leader, and Biden, then a senator, voted for it and then-President Clinton signed it. Toomey's spokesman, Nachama Soloveichik, made the same point Monday.

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